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## Moroccan feared CIA kidnap victim

The disappearance of an influential Moroccan socialist who was a key figure in organizing the First Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to be held in Havana next month is developing into an international incident.

Tentative reports from European newspapers indicate that the abduction of El Mahdi Ben Barka may have been engineered by either the Moroccan secret service or the CIA.

On October 29 Ben Barka was in Paris to meet with leading French filmmakers to discuss his part in making a film about the collapse of colonialism in Africa.

Ben Barka came to Paris from Switzerland where he has been living in exile since he was forced to flee Morocco by King Hassan.

### UNITY LEADERSHIP

While in exile Ben Barka maintained his leadership of the Moroccan Unity of National Popular Forces (UNPF) and sought to reconcile his differences with the King.

He had recently been elected President of the International Preparatory Committee of the Havana Conference.

The Cuban delegation to the preparatory committee charged Ben Barka's disappearance was engineered by forces seeking to sabotage the conference.

As he approached the cafe where he was to meet the filmmakers Ben Barka and a friend were accosted by two men posing as police officers. They grabbed Ben Barka, pushed him into a waiting car and knocked his companion to the ground.

### DELAY UNEXPLAINED

Five days later French authorities began the search for the missing Moroccan. They have been unable to explain this delay.

The car in which Ben Barka was carried off was traced to a villa outside Paris owned by a notorious underworld figure who has close ties with the Moroccan security police.

Moroccan security chief Gen-

eral Mohamed Oufkir is reported to have flown secretly to Paris on Oct. 30 and returned to Morocco the same day.

An Associated Press report from Morocco on Nov. 11 said the French police had charged King Hassan and General Oufkir with planning the abduction.

### VISIT CANCELLED

French relations with Morocco have become strained. The King and several of his ministers have cancelled a visit to Paris.

De Gaulle is reportedly infuriated over what he has termed "a violation of French sovereignty" by the activities of Moroccan secret police on French soil.

The Soviet news magazine New Times (No. 40) said this week Ben Barka had been under surveillance by American intelligence since his election to the Preparatory Committee. The magazine also charges that a young Moroccan secret agent who posed as an exchange student was responsible for the abduction.

New Times suggests Ben Barka's disappearance is linked more closely to Moroccan politics than to the Havana conference.

### AMNESTY PROMISED

In April, reports the magazine, King Hassan sent word to Ben Barka that he wished him to return to the country. The King also promised a general amnesty for political prisoners.

Ben Barka is reported to have replied he would return after the amnesty had been declared and General Oufkir had been dismissed as Minister of the Interior.

The conservative and reactionary officials in the King's court were successful in blocking agreement to Ben Barka's demands.

Meanwhile the investigation continues. After six weeks it is unlikely Ben Barka will be found alive. Even if he is, damage will have been done to preparations for the Havana conference, to the Moroccan left, and to Franco-Moroccan relations.